

Amendment to the Drawings:

An appendix beginning on page 18 of this paper includes replacement sheets 2/5 and 3/5. These replacement sheets include changes to FIGS. 2-4. More specifically, previous reference number “185” in the upper portion of FIG. 2 has been changed to “122” to provide consistency with the specification as amended by the present amendment. Reference number “186” has been added to FIG. 3 and reference number “312” has been added to FIG. 4. These reference numbers also provide consistency with the specification as amended by the present amendment. No new matter is believed to be involved and therefore entry of the replacement sheets is respectfully requested.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets 2/5 and 3/5

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Review and reconsideration of the subject application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

By the present amendment, applicant cancels claims 4, 5, 7, and 14-18 without prejudice and amends claims 1-3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 19-21. New claims 22-29 have been added. All claims are believed to be drawn to the “Invention I” elected in the “Response to Election” by the applicant dated October 20, 2006. The specification and drawings have been amended for consistency between the specification and drawings. The specification has also been amended to correct typographical errors and provide antecedent basis for claim features. The amendment to the claims, addition of new claims, and amendments to the specification and drawings do not involved the introduction of new matter. Accordingly reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

In the Official action dated January 29, 2007, the examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a). More specifically, the examiner stated the vertical sealing area of the vertical gasket in claim 5 and the aperture of claim 12 must be shown or the features canceled from the claims. By way of the present amendment, claim 5 has been canceled. Moreover, the “vertical sealing area” now set forth in claim 6 is referenced with reference number “186” found in FIG. 3 of replacement sheet 3/5 of the drawings and mentioned in the amendment to the paragraph appearing on page 6, lines 15-28 of the specification. Claim 12 has been amended to remove “the aperture”. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection of the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a).

The examiner further objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include reference number 205 set forth in the specification. By way of the present

amendment, reference number “205” has been changed to “195” in the amendment to the paragraph appearing on page 5, line 23-page 6, line 1. Accordingly, as the specification is no longer believed to refer to reference number “205”, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5).

The examiner further rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. More specifically, the examiner stated that it is unclear what the “vertical sealing area” is in claim 5. Claim 5 has been canceled by the present amendment. Moreover, the “vertical sealing area” now set forth in claim 6 is referenced with reference number “186” found in FIG. 3 of replacement sheet 3/5 of the drawings and mentioned in the amendment to the paragraph appearing on page 6, lines 15-28 of the specification. Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

The examiner further rejects claims 1, 5, 8 and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,813,085 to Fritz et al. The examiner further rejects claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fritz et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection at least for the following reasons. Initially, it is noted that claims 5 and 7 have been canceled without prejudice. Moreover, Fritz et al. fails to include teach or suggest limitations required by claims 1, 6, 8 and 19-21.

Claim 1 sets forth (emphasis added):

1. A locking mechanism for a central vacuum system with a debris receptacle and a canister, the locking mechanism comprising:

a vertical gasket to facilitate an air-tight seal between a debris receptacle and a canister of a central vacuum system; and

a twist-lock latch configured to guide a handle portion of the debris receptacle to a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the vertical gasket.

Claim 19 sets forth (emphasis added):

19. A locking mechanism for a central vacuum system including a debris receptacle with a handle portion, the locking mechanism comprising:

a vertical gasket coupled to a canister; and

at least one twist-lock latch coupled to the canister, wherein the twist-lock latch is configured to locate a handle portion of a debris receptacle in a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the vertical gasket.

Claim 21 sets forth (emphasis added):

21. A locking mechanism for a central vacuum system with a debris receptacle and a canister, the locking mechanism comprising:

sealing means for facilitating an air-tight seal between a debris receptacle and a canister; and

latching means for securing the debris receptacle to the canister, the latching means including a twist-lock latch configured to guide a handle portion of the debris receptacle to a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the sealing means.

With respect to claim 1, the Fritz et al. patent fails to teach or suggest a twist-lock latch configured to guide a handle portion of the debris receptacle to “a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the vertical gasket” as required by claim 1. With respect to claim 19, the Fritz et al. patent fails to teach or suggest a twist-lock latch configured to locate a handle portion of a debris receptacle in “a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the vertical gasket” as required by claim 19. With respect to claim 21, the Fritz et al. patent fails to teach or suggest a twist-lock latch configured to guide a handle portion of the debris receptacle to “a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the sealing means” as required by claim 21. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of claims 1, 19 and 21 in view of Fritz et al. Applicant further respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of claims 6 and 8, for example, as depending from claim 1 that is believed to be allowable for the reasons set forth above. Applicant further respectfully request withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of claim 20, for example, as depending from claim 19 that is believed to be allowable for the reasons set forth above.

The examiner further rejects claims 2-4 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fritz et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,279,355 to Schwartz et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection at least for the following reasons. Initially, it is noted that claims 4 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice. Moreover, neither Fritz et al. nor Schwartz et al., alone or in combination, teach or suggest the limitations required by claims 2 and 3. For example, neither Fritz et al. nor Schwartz et al., either alone or in combination teach or suggest a twist-lock latch configured to guide a handle portion of the debris receptacle to “a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the vertical gasket” as required by claim 1 (from

which claims 2 and 3 depend). Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of the claims.

The examiner further rejects claims 9, 11 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schwartz et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection at least for the following reasons. Schwartz et al. fails to include teach or suggest limitations required by claims 9, 11 and 13.

Claim 9 sets forth (emphasis added):

9. A twist-lock latch for use in a locking mechanism of a central vacuum system including a canister and a debris receptacle with a handle portion, the twist-lock latch comprising:

a first shelf portion to provide a resting area for a handle portion of a debris receptacle when the debris receptacle is in a lock position;

an open lateral end portion configured to laterally receive the handle portion of the debris receptacle from a position outside a canister; and

a stop detent configured to facilitate proper engagement of the handle portion in the lock position.

The Schwartz et al. patent fails to teach or suggest a twist-lock latch with “an open lateral end portion configured to laterally receive the handle portion of the debris receptacle from a position outside a canister” as required by claim 9. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of 9 in view of Fritz et al. Applicant further respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of claims 11 and 13, for example, as depending from claim 9 that is believed to be allowable for the reasons set forth above.

The examiner further rejects claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartz et al as applied to claim 9 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,108,860 to Crouser. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection at least for the following reasons. Neither Schwartz et al. nor Crouser, alone or in combination, teach or suggest the limitations required by claim 10. For example, neither Schwartz et al. nor Crouser, either alone or in combination teach or suggest the limitations of claim 9 in combination with a twist-lock latch including “an open lateral end portion configured to laterally receive the handle portion of the debris receptacle from a position outside a canister” as required by claim 9 (from which claim 10 depends). Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of claim 10.

The examiner further rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartz et al as applied to claim 9 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,347,430 to Buss et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection at least for the following reasons. Neither Schwartz et al. nor Buss et al., alone or in combination, teach or suggest the limitations required by claim 12. For example, neither Schwartz et al. nor Crouser, either alone or in combination teach or suggest the limitations of claim 9 in combination with a twist-lock latch including “an open lateral end portion configured to laterally receive the handle portion of the debris receptacle from a position outside a canister” as required by claim 9 (from which claim 12 depends). Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the corresponding rejection of claim 12.

Applicant adds new claims 22-29 to provide additional scope for the invention. Claims 22-29 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the following reasons. For example, claims 22-25 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 that is believed to be in condition for allowance as set forth above. With respect to claims 26-29, the references fail

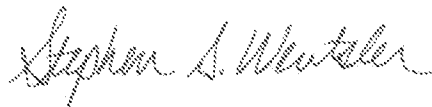
to teach or suggest a twist-lock latch including a contoured ramp configured to guide a handle portion of the debris receptacle to “a lock position between the twist-lock latch and the vertical gasket” as set forth in claim 26.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 35650.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

2/5

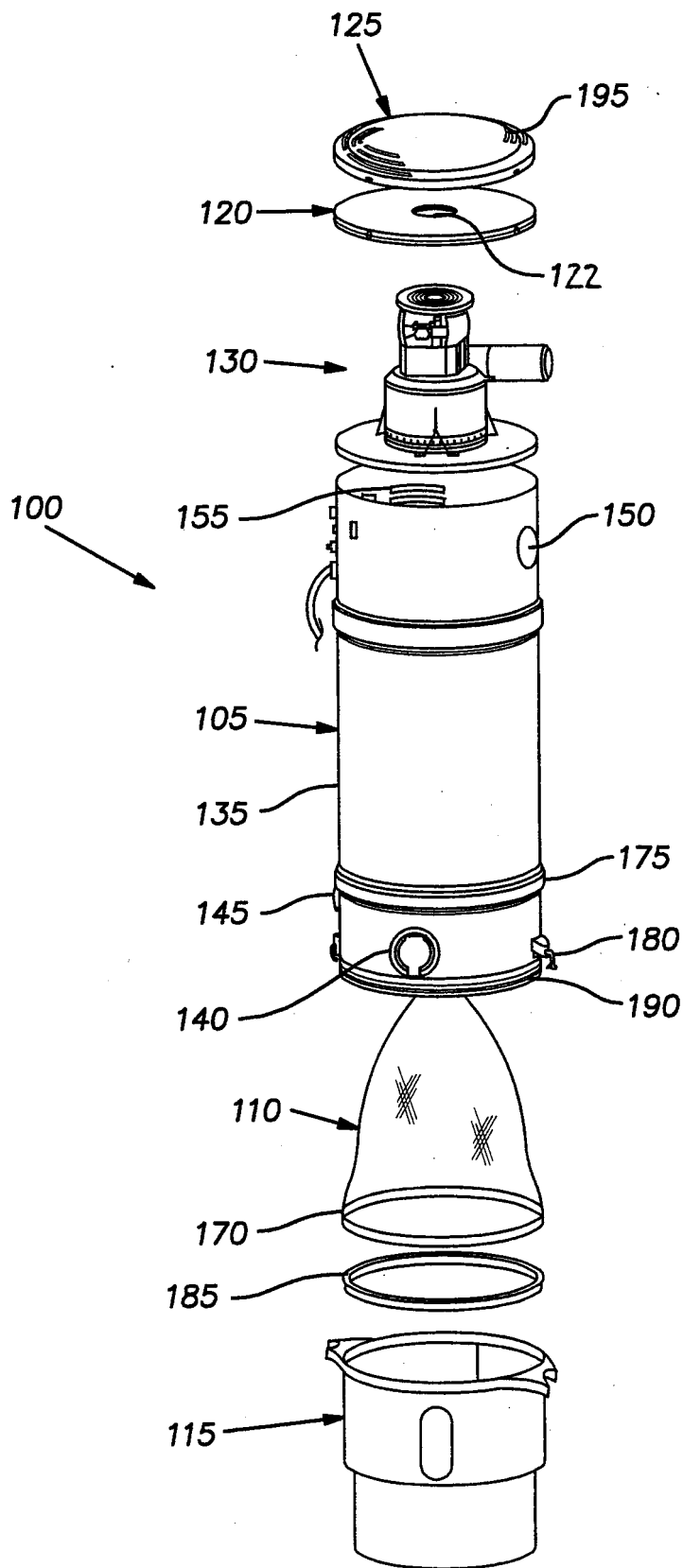


FIG. 2

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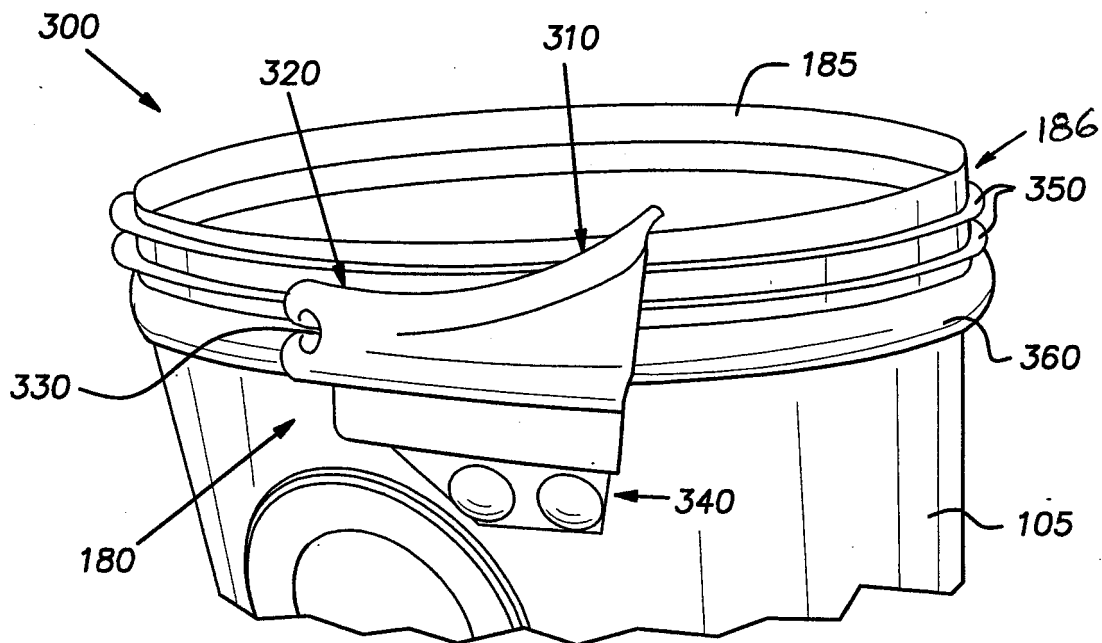


FIG. 3

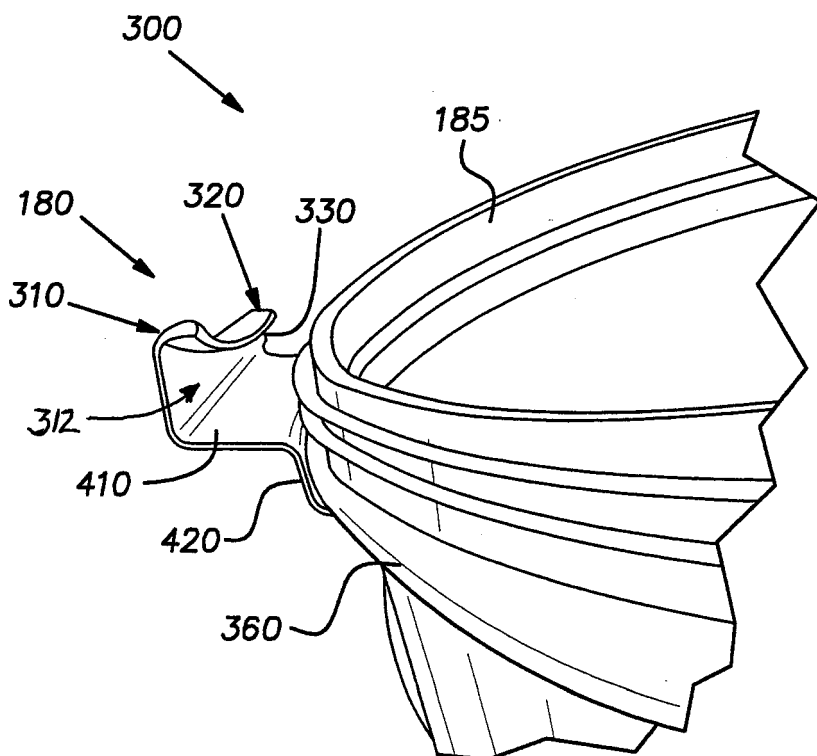


FIG. 4